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* " THE STAG RANCH " *

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* Property of Johnnie Speer. *****

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THE STAG RANCH

CAST

STEVE WEST LEAD
ALEX CHARACTER
FRECKLES TOBY COMEDY
BUDDY JUVENILE

HELEN EAST LEAD
QUANITA HEAVY

SETTING

The exterior of the Stag Ranch yard. House on L.

PROPS

One gun
Bench
Money bag
Dagger
Pencil and paper

MISS EAST AND MR. WEST.

STEVE

(ENTERS FROM HOUSE BEHIND ALEX) Now! Now! Boss, don't lose your temper. A woman is a woman.

ALEX

A woman is a pest! I tell you I'm going to kick that female off of my ranch. She can just go back to Boston where she come from. All she came down here for was just to get atmosphere for some story she says she's writing.

~~HEWINK~~ FRECKLES

Gosh, I want to read it when she gets through with--She says there was a good lookin' hero in it. I'll bet she wrote that after me.

ALEX

And she said there was a crabid old ranch owner in it. Durn her hide! I'll bet she was inferrin' that I'm crabid. I don't think it means good luck havin' her here. I've owned Stag Ranch for forty years and there never was but one woman allowed to live on it. That was the woman who tried to trim me out of every dime I owned. (CLENCHES FIST) I hate women and I always will.

FRECKLES

I kinda like 'em myself.

ALEX

Of course. It's just such brainless wonders as you that fall for women. A man with good sense wouldn't have a woman near him.

FRECKLES

I guess that's why that woman trimmed you out of so much money, aintit

ALEX

Sure! Say--shut your mouth! Well, the only reason I'm putting up with her is because--I knew her daddy real well. If it wasn't for that I'd fire her off the ranch in a minute. The first thing I know she'll be trying to steal my nephew Buddy.

FRECKLES

No she won't. Buddy's in love with---(STOPS)

ALEX

(QUICKLY PICKING UP) In love with who? Come on. Freckles, you started to say something about my nephew being in love with some woman--- I know what you're thinking about. It's that Mexican dance hall woman. Steve, you're a cāse observer, what have you noticed about her and my nephew?

STEVE

Don't know nothin' much---

ALEX

Steve, you're gnerally pretty truthfull but right now you're lying.

STEVE

Apex! I've knocked about the world a bit, and been up against it pretty hard at times, but as far as I kin remember I aint never been called a liar before and let the man live!

ALEX

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ALEX
Aw---I---I know you're all right, Steve, and I think a lot of you--almost as much as I do of my nephew---and your word goes with me every time. But I'm worried, durn my cowhide, I'm worried about my nephew. He's just like a flesh and blood son to me. My sister left him to me when she died---I've raised him ever since he was ten years old. Well, you---you've heard something about him and that Mexican gal, now aint you?

STEVE
Oh well-- (BUDDY ENTERS AND LISTENS FROM R. U.)

ALEX
Now it aint just somuch that she's a mexican, but she's the low kind--as low as they make 'em. Why she dances at the dance hall for money--and she's not a bit particular how she gets it nigher--- Well, all I got to say is I better not catch her on my ranch! (EXITS HOUSE L.)

BUDDY
(COMES DOWN) Well, what seems to be the matter with Uncle!

STEVE
Your Uncle seems to be pretty worried about you and that Quanita woman, Buddy.

FRECKLES
Gosh, can't you pick anything better to fall in love with than that durn critter. Why she---

BUDDY
(LOOKS STRAIGHT AT FRECKLES) The first man that says anything against her, gets a bullet from me.

FRECKLES
You know I always did like her.

STEVE
Buddy, you come with me, I want to talk with you. (THEY EXIT R. U.)

FRECKLES
Gee Whiz---he's sure gettin' fierce since he met that woman. I'll bet he's hung around her so much he's gettin' hot like them Mexican peppers (HELEN ENTERS FROM HOUSE L. CRYING GOES OVER TO BENCH) Aw the poor woman's crying. (GOES OVER TO HER SHE LEANS HEAD ON HIS CHEST) oh! oh.

HELEN
Oh I'm so miserable! I've gotten four whole chapters of the book I'm writing done, and the hero and the heroine have never met yet. Oh I feel so lonely out here on this ranch. Sometimes I almost wish I had never left Boston and come out here to write a story of the West. The men here are all so cold---they all hate women.

FRECKLES
All except me!

HELEN
(PATTING HIS CHEEK) Freckles, you're a dear.

FRECKLES
No, I'm a bear. When I was a baby I was marked with a bear. I was born with bare feet.

(LAUGHS) Oh, Freckles.

FRECKLES

Hey, did you know I love you? You're the only woman I ever loved - with the exception of nine others. Maybe you and I could get married. Huh? Like the idea? Say from now on I'm gonna be your sweet daddy.

HELEN

(LAUGHS) All right, Freckles---you may, and thanks for the many laughs that you give me. (EXITS HOUSE)

FRECKLES

You little devil! That ain't all I'd like to give you. Gee, ain't it hell to be in love? (EXITS R. U.)

***** NUMBER ONE *****

Q U ANITA

(ENTERS STEALTHILY X'S TO HOUSE CALLS SOFTLY) Buddy! Buddy!

BUDDY

(ENTERS FROM HOUSE) Q uanita, what are you doing here?

QUANITA

I want to see you? You mad because I come?

BUDDY

Mad? Of course not. I'm glad to see you and some day I hope to have you with me always.

QUANITA

And when will that day come? Why not marry me now?

BUDDY

Because my uncle does not like you and you see I--I have to wait until I can get some money.

QUANITA

Ah yes---money! Your uncle---he very wealthy---very rich yes? When he die you get all his money---yes?

BUDDY

Yes, he will leave me everything that is if I don't do anything to get him sore at me. I'm afraid if I marry you without his consent he would cut me off without a cent.

QUANITA

Ah, Buddy, you must plan for our hasty marriage. When Mexican he love---he do anything---even keel. Maybe so you could rob your uncle take money and we go away to make marriage.

BUDDY

No I can't do that.

QUANITA

Maybe you no want to? Maybe you in love with this white faced visitor you have here on ranch.

BUDDY

No I care nothing for her---Q uanita---it is only you.

Q. UANITA 4

That ees good---I am satisfied. Come wee will go to quite place and you can whisper love makings in my ear. (THEY EXIT R. U.)

* HELEN

(ENTERS AND IS WRITING ON PAPER)

FRECKLES

(ENTERS AND SITS DOWN BESIDE HER) Gosh still writing on your story. Must be gonna be great stuff. Is it a love story? If it is, I can tell you a lot about love. Were you ever in lov e?

HELEN

Freckles, ever since the first day I came to this ranche I have been in love.

FRECKLES

Gee so hage I! (STEVE ENTERS STANDS R. AND ROLLS A CIGARETTE)

HELEN

(LOOKING AT STEVE) He's tall! His eyes seem like deep pools of saphare. He seems to be a gentleman.

FRECKLES

Yes, I'll admit I am.

HELEN

I would love to see him with silk opera hat on, and a tuxedo.

FRECKLES

Gosh, would you? Well, I'll go get mine. I've got a swell out-fit I never wear it out on the range 'cause it caused a stampede once. But it's a knockout. I'll go put it on. (EXITS IN HOUSE)

STEVE

(DOESN'T PAY ANY ATTENTION ACCIDENTALLY SITS DOWN BESIDE HELEN. SHE IS PLEASED AND MOVES OVER TO HIM) (HE NOTICES HER AND JUMPS UP) Oh gosh!

HELEN

It's a lovely day isn't it?

STEVE

Guess, so---I didn't know you were sittin' there. I was just thinkin'. How you comin' with your story book?

HELEN

I've got two whole chapters finished today. You see the girl in the story is in love with a man.

STEVE

They usually are!

HELEN

Her name is East and his name is West.

STEVE

That's my last name---West.

HELEN

So it is, and my last name is East. That's the title of my book. WWhen East is West" You see Miss East comes West and meets Mr. West. You're the hero and you marry the girl in the end

Gosh! That would be the end.

HELEN

Mr. West, you don't mind if I pattern my hero after you do you?

STEVE

No, but you're all wrong if you think I'd ever love the girl. Cause I love no woman.

HELEN

Don't you think you could learn?

STEVE

Maybe but I don't want to. I---I hate women. It was a woman that caused my father to committ suicide---and then shortly after his death my mother died of a broken heart.

HELEN

This woman must not have been the right kind.

STEVE

She was a Mexican Dance Hall girl. About five years ago, my father owned one of the biggest and best cattle ranches in the Southwest. He had a happy home and family, but wealth rather turned his head. He met this scheming advenrturess in a saloon; she set her talents to working and soon she had robbed him of nearly everything he owned. When she had played him for his last cent, she laughed, snapped her fingers and left him. Coming to his senses, he saw what a fool he had been, and rather than live on, he killed himself- and the shock of it all killed my mother.

HELEN

Do you know the whereabouts of the dance hall girl?

STEVE

Yes---she is in the dance hall in town---I'm watching her.

HELEN

You would kill her?

STEVE

No, but I'm going to see that she does not bring ruin and disgrace to any one else. Miss, I draw the mark at striking or killing a woman. I respect 'em, Miss, I respect 'em--but I jest don't want a damn thing to do with 'em! (EXITS R. U.)

HELEN

Oh! (RISES. LOOKS AFTER HIM WITH DETERMINATION) Well, Mr. Steve West here is one woman that you are going to have something to do with, for when I leave this ranch, I leave as your wife! (EXITS HOUSE)
(EXIT R.)

FRICKLES

(ENTERS FROM HOUSE ALL DRESSED UP) Gosh I wonder where that Miss Helen is. She said she had fallen in love with my tall sap hired eyes. Said she wanted to see me in a plug hat, well, here I am all ready to show myself off. (EXITS L. U. BEHIND THE HOUSE)

BUDDY

(ENTERS R. U. WITH QUANITA) Now, Quanita, you wait here, and I'll be back in a minute, and then we'll go to the dance hall together. Be careful. I don't want my uncle to see us. (EXITS HOUSE)

STEVE

(ENTERS R. U.) You're just the lady I want to see.

QUANITA

What you want to see me about, Meestaire Steve? Mebbe so you tell me w why you no come to dance hall for long time to dance with me?

STEVE

I cut that tout because when I hug I prefere to hug in private.

QUANITA

Well, why you no tell me? Maybe I be glad to---

STEVE

Yep! I reckon you would---with anyone wearing pants. Listen, you I'm talking about that boy, Buddy. You leave him alone. He's young and foolish---you are worldly---and you're not going to wreke his life as you did my father's--- all you want is his money.

QUANITA

Steve West, I hate you! I always hate you, and when my hot blood of Spain boils over you will regret what you say and do to me. (RAISES KNIFE AS IF TO STAB HIM)

STEVE

(GRABBING HER ARM AND HOLDING IT WHILE HE TALKS TO HER) Listen, you heathen, you want to be gald tha t I have spared your life after the misery you dealt my family. Now put away your carving knife and go back to the dance-hall, and leave Buddy alone. (THROWS ARM DOWN)

BUDDY

(ENTERS FROM HOUSE) Are you ready to go, Quanita?

QUANITA

Yes, but I go alone. Buddy, I leave you with your friend Steve. He try to make love to me, but I tell heem I love only you. (LAUGHS. LOOKS AT STEVE AND GOES UP R. U.) Adios! Senor Steve! (EXITS R. U.)

STEVE

(LAUGHS) Well, I'll be---Bud, come on over here & want to talk to you.

BUDDY

Is it true? She's going to be my wife.

STEVE

Buddy, I'm very sorry to tell you that she's not going to be your wife.

BUDDY

Listen you tend to your own business. I'll do as I please. Get out of my way. (STARTS FOR R. U.)

STEVE

Where you going, son?

BUDDY

I'm going to the dance-hall.

STEVE

You're going to your own room and go to bed.

BUDDY

Wahse going to make me?

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I am! (TAKES HIM BY THE NECK AND LIFTS HIM UP AND CARRIES HIM OFF)

NUMBER TWO

FRECKLES

(ENTERS R. U.) Hey you seen her yet?

STEVE

Who---Miss East?

FRECKLES

Yeah, I been huntin' her ever since last night so she could see me dressed up.

STEVE

(LAUGHING) Well, if she ever sees you, she'll laugh herself to death.

FRECKLES

Well, I got to find that baby---she's my weakness now. (EXITS R.)

HELEN

(ENTERS FROM HOUSE) Good morning, Steve. Oh, Steve, I am so happy after what you said to me last night when all of the rest on the ranch were asleep. Steve, I have wanted you ever since the first time I saw you. And I'm going to make you see that all women are not bad. I want you to love me.

STEVE

Helen, I---I--want to but I'm afraid--doggone it---I never loved before

HELEN

(LOOKING INTO HIS EYES) It's never too late to begin, Steve.

STEVE

Gosh I---(VERY CLOSE TO HER) I---gotta go take care of them heifers! (EXITS R. U.)

FRECKLES

(ENTERS L. U?) There you are. Gee gosh I been lookin' all over everywhere for you. I got my outfit on. Aint it hot? You know you said last night you wanted to see me dressed up.

HELEN

See you dressed up? Why I never---

FRECKLES

Yes you did. You said you liked my tall dark eyes.

HELEN

Why, Freckles, I was talking about Steve. (LAUGHS) Oh isn't that funny

FRECKLES

(FACES DROPPING) Yeah--damn funny!

HELEN

Oh, Freckles did you think I mean that I loved you. Why you were mistaken. It's Steve, Freckles, and I've won his love. Last night after all of you were sound asleep we sat out here in the moonlight just two two-- and---

FRECKLES
(Beginning to bawl) Gosh durni it.

HELEN
Freckles, I--I'm sorry.

FRECKLES
So am I---I even went and bought a fifty cent neck tie.

HELEN
Well, you can use that any way.

FRECKLES
Sure I can---to hang myself with.

HELEN
Freckles, you wouldn't commit suicide would you?

FRECKLES
Sure! I aint got nothin' else to live for. Durn you females I'm gonna go to hatin' women. You're the tenth one that's turned me down.

HELEN
Well, every time a woman turned you down you never tried to committ suicide did you?

FRECKLES
Yep, never had any luck though. The last time I tried to commit suicide I took a room, a gun and a can of gasoline out to the river bank. I tied the rope to the limb of a tree, then poured gasoline all over myself and took the rope and put it around my neck. I lit the gasoline and tried to shoot myself with the gun, and the darn bullet went wild and shot the rope in two and I fell in the river, the water put out the gasoline and I would have drowned only the river was a creek and there wasn't any water in it. But I aint gonna try that again. I got a better way. I'm gonna haunt you and Steve. I read in a book where a feller once was jilted b a girl, and he went crazy---

HELEN
Well, you didn't go crazy did you?

FRECKLES
No---I was already there---aw shucks now. But I'm gonna follow you around like the guy in the story I read did. From now on every where you go my face will always be in front of you---everywhere you go or turn I'll either be in front or behind just like a shadow.

HELEN
(LAUGHS) Well, you wan't have any luck with me. (STARTS TO GO IN HOUSE
FRECKLES WALKS IN FRONT OF HER)

FRECKLES
You would break my heart. Turnin' me down like that. Gosh I even wahsed my neck for you. From now on I'm the mad liver- -I mean lover. (SHE STARTS TO GO R.) I'll follow you to depths of despair and back to St. Joe. (STICKS FACE IN FRONT OF HER) How do you like it? You will break my womanly heart?

HELEN

HELEN
If you don't stop that. I'm going to slap you.

STEVE
(ENTERS R.)Anything the matter, Helen?

HELEN
Yes. He's annoying me.

STEVE
Freckles! The hogs in the hog lot are calling you.

FRECKLES
You ought to know; you speak their language. (LOOKS AT HELEN SPITS
AND EXITS L.)

STEVE
What's the matter with him?

HELEN
Oh I don't know. He's crazy. Won't you sit down, Steve. (THEY SIT)
Steve, you held my hand last night. (HE HOLDS HER HAND) I leaned my
head on your shoulder (LEANS HEAD ON SHOULDER) Then you kissed me.

STEVE
That's right. We were all alone---just we two.

HELEN
We're all alone now, Steve.

FRECKLES
(STICKS HEAD AROUND WING) The hell you are!

STEVE
Freckles, what are you doing?

FRECKLES
I'm hauntin' her.

STEVE
Clear out of here. Beat it.

FRECKLES
All right. I'm goin'---but I'll be back. (EXITS)

HELEN
Thank heavens he's gone.

FRECKLES
(ENTERS) I come back again.

STEVE
(HOLDS UP FOOT) Freckles, do you see that?

FRECKLES
I couldn't help but see it; it's big enough.

STEVE
Well, it's going to connect with you in just about a minute. (MAKES
A KICK AT FRECKLES AS HE DUCKS)

FRECKLES
Never touched me.

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STEVE
(SITTING DOWN AGAIN) Let's see? Where were we when he interrupted.
Oh yes---now I remember. (PUTS ARMS AROUND HER) Helen, I love you.

FRECKLES
(STICKS HEAD AROUND) So do I!

STEVE
Get out of here. (SITS DOWN BY HER) You know it don't hardly seem right. A big rough neck like me havin' a little thing like you. Gosh your're so durned small and nice I could pick you up and crush you

FRECKLES
I wish he would! (CRAWLS BEHIND THEM ON BENCH AND PUTS HIS FOOT UNDER HERS TO LOOK LIKE HER FEET WERE HIS)

STEVE
Your little hands---your tiny little wrists---those sweet little lips ---and those dainty feet! (LOOKS DOWN AT THEM AND SEES FRECKLES' FEET)

HELEN
(LOOKS DOWN AT THEM AND SCREAMS) Oh heavens! (CHASE OFF)

***** NUMBER THREE *****

HELEN
(ENTERS WALKS ALL AROUND STAGE FOLLOWED BY FRECKLES) Freckles, stop it

FRECKLES
Can't! I'm haunt in' you.

HELEN
Oh why do you persist in tormenting me.

FRECKLES
Cause you won my heart and then threw me over.

HELEN
Oh will you please go.

FRECKLES
Go where?

HELEN
Well, I'm a lady and I can't tell you.

FRECKLES
Eh? Well, if you want me to go where I think you do, I won't do it.

STEVE
Freckles, are you still at it. (ENTERS R. U.* If you don't stop it I'm going to have you shot at sun rise.

FRECKLES
Can't do it. I don't get up that early.

STEVE
Come on. Let's go walking in the lane, Helen. (STARTS FRECKLES STARTS TOO) Where are you going?

FRECKLES
Walking in the lane. (FOLLOWS RIGHT BEHIND THEM)

QUANITA
(ENTERS FROM L. U. AS BUDDY ENTERS FROM HOUSE SNEAKING ON WITH A SACK OF MONEY) Buddy! Have you got the money.

BUDDY
Yes. Uncle was asleep. I managed to get his deposit box open and now we've got enough money to go away.

QUANITA
Quick! We must lose no time. Don't stop to wonder whether you are doing right or not. What do you care? (THEY START)

ALEX
(ENTERS WITH GUN) Stop! Buddy! So you've stopped this low. A thief. robbing me your own uncle. Buddy, I knew you weren't yourself since you met this woman, and so I just wanted to see how far you would go. I wasn't asleep at all. Any day you find your old uncle asleep it will be because somebody shot me in the back.

QUANITA
(TO BUDDY) Fool! One beeg jackass you are. Well, senor, I go!

FRECKLES
(ENTERS R. U) What's this---a hold up?

QUANITA
Oh there's my daddy. Freckles, how are you? I haven't seen you at the dance-hall lately. You used to come and dance so often. Have you fallen in love again with some one.

FRECKLES
Yep, I fell in love but she turned me down--

QUANITA
Too bad! I would not treat you that way, cutie! (TICKLES HIM UNDER CHIN)

BUDDY
Quanita, why are you doing this?

QUANITA
Why? Hump! I am through with you.. Now that your uncle knows you are a thief you will not get any of his money when he dies. You think I love you for nothing. (LAUGHS)

ALEX
Now, Buddy, you see what your little Mexican Rose really was, don't you

BUDDY
Yes I see!

QUANITA
Adios, Buddy! If your uncle ever forgives you, come and see me. Adios! (SNAPS FINGERS AT BUDDY) That for you! (GIVES HIGH KICK) And this is for you, Freckles. (EXITS)

FRECKLES
Well, wrap it up! Hot dog! She's my weakness now. (EXITS AFTER HER)

ALEX BUDDY
Uncle Alex, I've been a crazy fool. It is too much to ask you to forgive me.

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ALEX
It's all right, Nephew, I've already forgiven you but the next time don't lose your head over a woman.

BUDDY
I won't, and Uncle, you are a sly old rooster.

ALEX
Maybe so, but I aint got no use for the chickens.

STEVE
(ENTERS WITH HELEN FRECKLES BEHIND THEM) Are you still haunting us?

FRECKLES
Nope! I just want to tell you that I aint gonna haunt you no more.

STEVE
Well, thank heavens for that. Wouldn't it be awful to be married and wake up in the middle of the night and see that thing perched on the foot of the bed! (LAUGHS) But, mFreckles, who is your hot mama now.

FRECKLES
I'm gonna take Buddy's girl

STEVE
Well, if you mean Q uanita, it will do you no good because I have turne her over to authorities for a little bit of robbery she pulled through the United States mail and she'll get ten years for it.

FRECKLES
Huh! Ain't I gonna get to have her neither.

STEVE
No. I've been laying for her, and I just got the dope that will send her to the pen.

FRECKLES
Dad burn it, that's feamle number eleven I've lost. I'm gonna try my luck with a Chinaman. Look at 'em. (POINTS TO HELEN) Look at her. She broke my heart a million ways.

BUDDY
Took all your happy days.

FRECKLES
And left me lonely nights.

STEVE
Well, folks, it's all settled.

FRECKSL
What's all settled?

STEVE
It's settled that Miss East is going to become Mrs. West, and we're going South on the Great Northern.

FRECKLES
Well, I wish you luck, and from now on I'll have no more troulb e with women---for I'm going tou to the cow pen to be the lone wolf and play a single hand---and I hope I don't break an arm!

F I N A K E